2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42



## 1. Male and female servants.

People who are short of help in their family take in servants. They ask somebody to find some for them (saying): Find a servant or the like for us somewhere. When they have found some they tell them, saying: At such and such a place I have found that there is one. Then the man who wants a servant, and the one who went to find one, go and bring the young man or the girl, and his or her parents. They give them food and beer; thereupon they talk about the wages, in case of perquisites then of these, in case of money then about this. Male servants get two rupees yearly as wages, and as regards perquisites they will keep for themselves daily one handful of all kinds of agricultural crops, as they are harvested. Servant girls get only one rupee in yearly wages, but as regards harvest perquisites they get the same as male servants. The male servants get a change of clothes for the rainy season, viz., a piece of cloth five cubits long and a loin-strip. When they have worked the full year, they get a loin-cloth, five cubits long and a cotton-shawl of five cubits. At the Sohrae on the day of bathing they get twenty breads; at this time they talk about continuing or leaving. Servant girls get, as a change of clothes for the rainy season, a loin-cloth of three cubits and to carry over the breast and shoulder a piece of cloth, four cubits long. And when they have worked the full year, they get a woman's cloth, ten cubits long, to dress in. 357

The male servant helps the master, and the servant girl helps the master's wife. If there are no servant girls, the male servant will at cock-crow help the master's wife to pound. A male servant, with whose work and doings the master's wife is pleased, lives in great comfort. But if the master's wife is displeased, then however good the master may be, the male servant will have trouble. His food she will give him stingingly, and she will also worry her husband to make him scold the servant. If the master's wife is pleased with the servant, she will not let him be scolded by her husband. If the master's wife has a grown-up daughter, they may sometimes keep a servant also as a house-son-in-law; but only when the master's wife is pleased; it does not happen because the master says so. If the master's wife is always good, servant girls have great comfort, otherwise they get no end of trouble.

If they take some boy in, only to tend the cattle, they give such a one one rupee the year, and as clothes a loin-cloth, five cubits long, and a cotton shawl, five cubits long, besides food.

When they engage hired workers during the time of agricultural work, whether they are men or women, they give them breakfast, the noon-meal, for the children one portion rice left-over from last evening, and two seers paddy or Indian corn, as wages. 464 465

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the *Sakrat*. At this time offerings are made to the ancestors in each house, and the celebration is accompanied by a display of stick dancing, which has replaced the former "sword and shield" dance. At the end of the following month the *Mag Sim*, the hen at the end of the month of *Mag*, is offered. In former times the village officials used to resign at this time and could be either replaced or reappointed, but the only relic of the old practice that has survived is that the headman has to treat the whole village to beer. Contracts with servants are renewed during the festival, and they receive the cloth that is always a part of the contract. In connection with rice cultivation there is the *Erok' Sim*, the hen that is offered at the time of sowing, and *Nãwãi*, when the first fruits of the first rice crop are offered in the sacred grove. Before this takes place the new rice must not be eaten. The village priest cuts the first handful of the crop and offers some at the foot of each of the chief trees. A sprig is also tied round the trunk of the trees and remains there. While the prayer is being said, milk is poured on the offering. After the priest has done his part, similar offerings are made in every house to the house spirits and the ancestors, the rice being taken from the crops belonging to the family. In varying degrees the Santals share in some of the festivals and practices of the low-caste cultivators around them. In the early monsoon days, during the period of *Rohini*, which is an auspicious time for sowing rice, they make a mark round their houses with cowdung as a protection against snakes. The snake goddess festival occurs in late August, and although its observance is not widespread among the Santals there are some local celebrations, especially when there is an *ojha* in the village. The *ojhas* all keep this festival, and others go to them at this time to ask for medicines against snakebite. Some Hindu festivals, as we have seen, furnish the occasion for large gatherings of Santals. At Sarenga, in addition to the Lakshmi Puja, a somewhat smaller gathering takes place during the hot weather in connection with the celebration of the Siva Gajon at a local temple. At this time the Charak, or hook-swinging festival, otherwise known as the *Pata*, takes place. The practice has almost died out within the last fifteen years. It had been prohibited by the government, but as long as the old generation, which was accustomed to the practice, remained it continued with gradually diminishing fervour. The Santals gather now to sing and to dance. They also join the throngs of pilgrims, sightseers and traders who collect at the Bogri *mela*, or fair,